

A RESOLUTION to congratulate Coach Joyce Lee-McNelis and the University of Memphis women's basketball team on winning the Great Midwest Conference regular season title and for their success in the NCAA tournament.

WHEREAS, dedication, perseverance, and a realization of goals are the hallmark of excellence in all achievements; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly recognizes that Coach Lee-McNelis and the Lady Tigers basketball team exemplify the quality of Tennessee's athletes by their performances both on and off the court; and

WHEREAS, Memphis not only recorded a memorable regular season by compiling a 20-6 regular season record, but also advanced to the finals of the Great Midwest Conference tournament, and finished their season with an impressive performance in the NCAA tournament; and

WHEREAS, in the course of the regular season, the Tigers enjoyed several key wins, including two wins over the University of Alabama-Birmingham which propelled the team to the Conference title, and a victory over nationally ranked regional rival Ole Miss, a win which established the lady Tigers as a team to be watched; and

WHEREAS, the starting lineup for the Lady Tigers is one of the most consistent and talented to ever have played for the team, with the likes of Keeta Matthews, Kitty Allen, Nicole Murry, Heather Newlon, and LaTonya Johnson, all of whom have distinguished themselves with individual and team honors; and

WHEREAS, Keeta Matthews was the anchor for her team, with consistently inspiring play, an average of almost 19 points and over 8 rebounds per game, and rounding out her

game with 61 steals and 71 assists on the season, and being named to the All Great Midwest Conference team for the third year in row; and

WHEREAS, Kitty Allen performed solidly both offensively and defensively all season, averaging 16 points per game and providing her team with 96 assists while blocking 28 shots and recording 72 steals, and was named to the All Great Midwest Conference second-team; and

WHEREAS, LaTonya Johnson continued the recent early recruiting success of the Lady Tigers by being named the Great Midwest Conference Newcomer of the Year, an award that has gone to a Memphis player for three consecutive seasons, and one richly deserved by LaTonya for her impressive average of almost 18 points and 6 rebounds per game, in addition to a team high 732 steals; and

WHEREAS, Nicole Murry and Heather Newlon kept the Tigers running smoothly, with Nicole dishing out a team high total of 164 assists on the season, and an additional total of five double figure scoring games, and Heather leading the starters with a near 52% field goal percentage and an average of 12 points per game, and most importantly, receiving the team's Top Cat awards for her outstanding grade point average of 4.0; and

WHEREAS, Dena Love, Regan Fedric, Dwella Smith, ShaKeisha Chambers, and Niki Bolden all played a vital role in the Lady Tigers successful season, with Dena unselfishly giving out 71 assists, Regan adding a career high 18 points versus Depaul and a 52% field goal percentage overall, Dwella chipping in 11 points versus Cal Poly-SLO and 10 rebounds against Southern Methodist, Niki's career high 19 point effort against Oral Roberts, and ShaKeisha's triumph over a pre-season injury to return to play in the Lady Tigers' stellar year; and

WHEREAS, with Coach Lee-McNelis and her assistants, Angela Scott and Michael Ladner, leading the team towards their goals, Memphis built on the momentum from their regular season accomplishments and completed a strong post-season; and

WHEREAS, in first-round action Memphis defeated The University of Southern California, a prestigious team with a great basketball legacy, a Tiger win which resulted in the

disappointment of at least one postcard correspondent, and elevated the Lady Tigers' place in the collegiate basketball arena; and

WHEREAS, although the team succumbed to a very talented and deep Vanderbilt team in the next round the Lady Tigers proved that they have a competitive group of players who will be back next year and who will be lifting their goals and their game; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we congratulate Coach Joyce Lee-McNelis and the University of Memphis women's basketball team on wining the Great Midwest Conference championship, and extend to them our deepest congratulations for their successful NCAA tournament.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation to Coach Lee-McNelis, team members and the school, with this final clause omitted.

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